

WITH THEIR heads held high, knowing that they are the talk of the footballing world, a Wycombe Wanderers squad of 26, including 18 players flew up to Middlesbrough on Monday night for their third round F.A. Cup replay with the First Division side.

Wycombe Wanderers, or should it be Wycombe Wonders? For less than 48 hours previously they had staggered the world of sport by not only holding the second-placed Division One side to a goalless draw, but by outplaying them in the second half.

The Wanderers made the trip to the North East knowing that if they beat Middlesbrough, then Sunderland, who won the FA Cup in 1973, will be the fourth round visitors to Loakes Park.

The Wanderers stayed at the Tall Trees Hotel on Teesside on Monday night and had a work out on Middlesbrough's training ground on Tuesday morning.

After tonight's replay they come back home by coach and hope to be in Wycombe by five o'clock on Wednesday morning.

Saturday's match, no doubt about it, was the biggest thing that has happened to Wycombe in years. Television, sound radio and the national press descended on Loakes Park and the Wanderers earned Wycombe publicity by the ton.

They deserved every bit of it, and when it was all over the crowd went mad with joy.

So did Middlesbrough's manager, Jackie Charlton, with relief.

A credit to Wycombe

The match was well staged and there were few grumbles.

Nearly 100 regular police, supported by squads of Special Constabulary, were on duty at the big match.

But no incidents were reported. And the 'Black Maria,' standing by just in case, was not used.

"Everything went very smoothly," Supt. David Aspley, of High Wycombe police division, told Mid-week. "Everyone was well behaved. We were very pleased."

And ITV commentator Brian Moore said afterwards: "It was all a credit to Wycombe."

It was, and Mr. Moore hit the nail right on the head with this summing up.

Back to the big replay.

Hundreds of fans, preparing for the trek to Middlesbrough were angry that British Rail had not laid on a 'football special' for them.

The fans are making the 600 mile round trip in coaches and a fleet of private cars.

British Rail say that they could not provide a train because of staffing difficulties.

The fans' disappointment was shared by Wanderers' manager, Mr. Brian Lee.

"It is sad when so many people would like to see the replay that it is in midweek, and sad that those who could make the journey can't have a special train because there is no driver," he said.

A spokesman for British Rail pointed out that laying on a long distance train required not just one driver, but several crews.

"We would need four or five changes of crews in each direction on a run like this. Drivers must know the line and therefore can only drive in a limited area," he said.

"We would have been delighted to have been able to have helped and we wish the Wanderers all the very best," he added.